

THE LIFE OF  
**DAVID HOGGART,**

**THE MURDERER,**

ALIAS M'c COLGAN, ALIAS DANIEL O'BRIAN;

**RELATED BY HIMSELF,**

*WHILE UNDER SENTENCE OF DEATH.*

**THIS UNHAPPY YOUTH**

**WAS EXECUTED AT EDINBURGH,**

On the 18th of July, 1821,

**FOR THE**

**MURDER OF MORRIN,**

*One of the Turnkeys of Dumfries Gaol.*

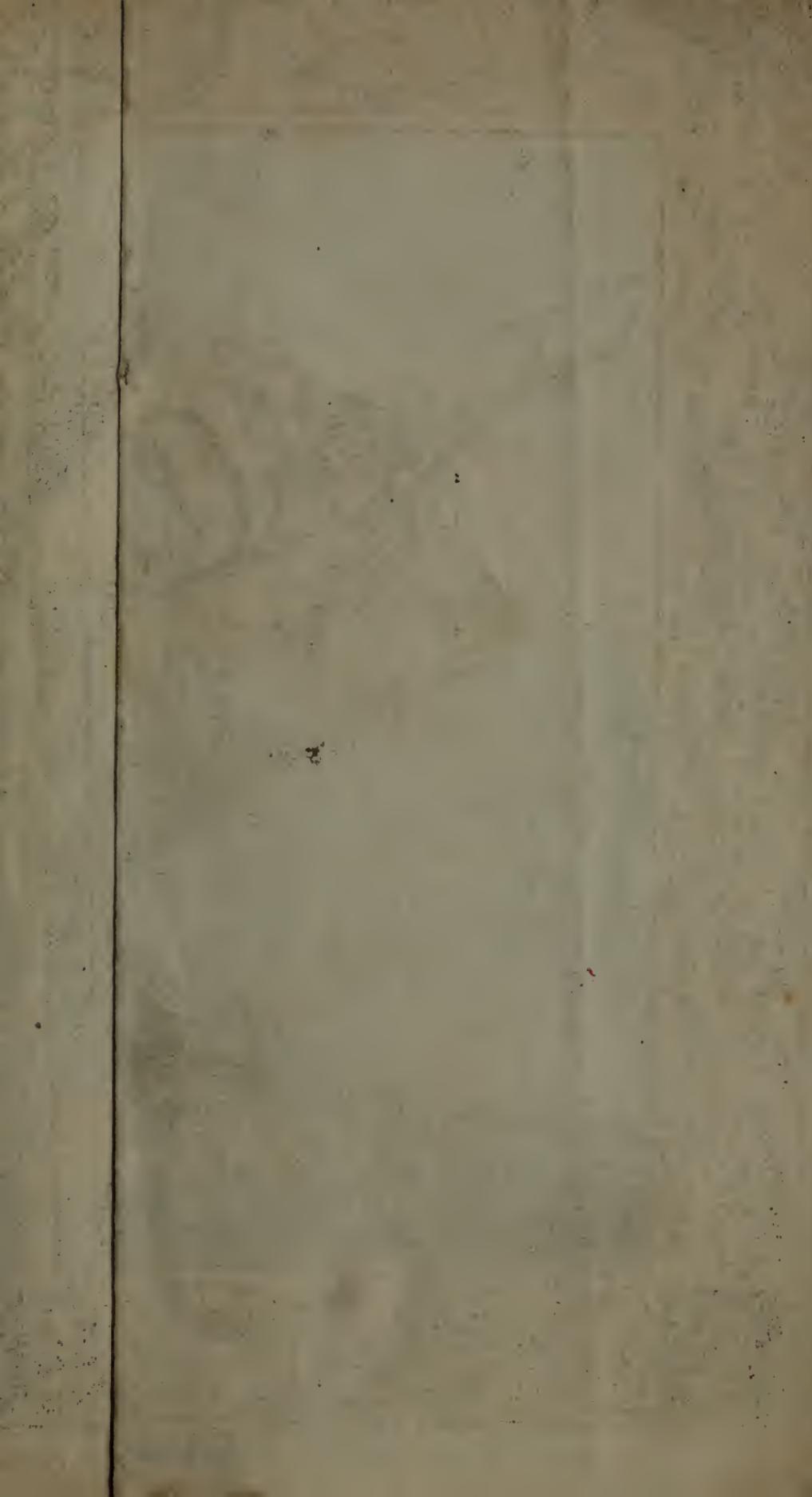
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THE unhappy subject of the following pages was executed in the city of Edinburgh, in the month of July 1821, in the twenty-first year of his age. His life, though so short, was old in infamy; and his story unfolds as undeviating a course of wickedness, as ever disgraced human nature; it was related at various times by himself, while under sentence of death; and thus, though the remembrance of the evil he committed survives him, unfortunately, no good is recorded of him, excepting his, we hope, not too late repentance. His adventures fall far short of those of Barrington, Vaux, &c. ; he must be rather classed as a hero of an humbler sphere, without the atrocity that marks a kind of criminal grandeur, and demands abhorrent vengeance, while lesser villanies obtain only contemptuous stripes. He committed, however, at least, one murder, that of Morrin, the turnkey of Dumfries gaol, for which he suffered the merited sentence of the law. He never appears to have wanted courage in any of the appalling incidents or dangers to which his turpitude exposed him.

The career of vice is not without its moral lesson; and, in this respect, the memoir of Hoggart, who has expiate his offences on the scaffold, is most unquestionably calculated to do more good than the adventures of the re-

nowned Don Juan, and other heroes of the modern school, dressed out in all the gay colours of genius, and as happy revellers in every loose indulgence and change of sin, as lust, rapine, robbery, and assassination. In this memoir, the youth alone of the miserable criminal calls forth our pity, and we are not insensibly led, by delusive reasonings and dazzling fancies, to lose our detestation of guilt in admiration of the perpetrator, in doubt as to his motives, and in sorrow for apparently inadvertent circumstances controlling his destiny. Here the lovely nymphs are made women of the town, and the flowing goblets of intoxicating wine and nectar, common drink, gin or beer; the dearest associate in depredation is but a pot, and the high-spirited corsair but a pirate robber, whose daring carries him through his brief voyage, and finally surrenders him to the hangman.

David Hoggart's original relation is full of what is called *slang* terms; the writer of this edition purposely omits them out of, he trusts, obvious and praiseworthy motives — respect to the purity of the rising generation, to which such guilty knowledge must convey harm, and mar the good intent that led to the publishing of his crimes.

He was born near Edinburgh, in November, 1800, of parents situated in middle life; but a large family, and expenses incident to such an increase, rather reduced them; yet they were still comfortable in their circumstances, and much respected. Out of pity to them, and in compliance with the wishes of the deceased culprit, we abstain from saying more concerning them than that Hoggart was the real name. In all his scrapes, David was very tenacious not to involve his family in his guilt, and denied his name and residence as often as he could. The strong interest he had in this respect, appears in a verse, among others he made a short time before his execution. Of the levity a number of lines contained, he testified afterwards a strong contrition, and attributes them to a spirit of outward bravado, while he was inwardly suffering all the torments of a guilty conscience. His father, brothers, and sisters, are still living to lament his guilty career and premature death, but his mother sunk

broken-hearted to the grave, as soon as she, poor woman ! found, after repeated trials, that her favourite son was not to be reclaimed from the fell paths of vice. This fatal event made but a transient impression on David ; as to his pursuits he at first promised fair, but soon returned to his guilty companions, and meretricious haunts.

His first fault was truancy from school, which had been carried on to a dangerous length before a discovery was made, by the mother accidentally calling at the seminary, and finding her son absent ; it was then discovered that he had made the story of his repeated absences good to the master. Upon this being found out, he was watched, and it was discovered that he was connected with a gang of pickpockets ; and before he attained fully his tenth year, he was arraigned at the bar as a thief, but turned over to his friends at the intercession of the prosecutor, on account of his imbecile age.

For a twelvemonth he was confined strictly at home, as his parents thought ; but he said, in prison, that he often had a scamper with the " lads of the town, after his parents and the rest of the family were in bed, and little imagining what was going on.

He was bound apprentice to a mill-wright at this early period, in hopes to detach him from all bad pursuits ; and he slept at home. He says for himself, that he frequently collected money for his master, but never wronged him of a single penny ; yet the sameness of the life he led, the early hours his parents kept, and his scantiness of cash, disgusted him ; in addition to this, several of his former companions pursued him with their remarks, and he determined to *cut*, as he expresses it, *the concern* altogether.

His person, at this time, gave indications of the superiority to which mature years would attach it : tall in stature, and of a commanding aspect ; limbs so flexible that they could turn any way at pleasure, and legs that in speed resembled the deer when first started from its native plains.

He mentioned some peculiar circumstances, an over-hasty birth, and two teeth when born, with an uncommon

forwardness of intellect and speech ; surely they were gifts not to be misused. In one of his apprehensions, being under close confinement in Edinburgh, he said, "I cannot help it; I was born for a thief; look at my fingers, they are all of an equal length, like the prongs of a fork, and thus they never fail me." This was true; his fingers reached all to one exact length, and is rather curious, but by no means singular, or as being confined to that individual. A gentleman present, who was esteemed for his researches in philosophy and nature, said, "My lad, make a good use of your long-forked fingers, as many have done before you; one of the best emperors that ever lived had the like, and so had a celebrated professor of music; the one was a virtuous, just, enlightened, and most exalted sovereign; and the other, what Pope terms, a noble work—an honest man; and I could quote several other examples." Hoggart, at that time a most hardened sinner, only sneered at the remark and advice joined together, and said, "Fate was fate"—an unhappy conclusion, drawn by too many out of the right line, who let things come and go as they will, and never set their shoulder to the wheel, but accuse predestination of all their wants and woes.

Again, by the influence of his friends, Hoggart was received by his former master, and all went on for some time in a most favourable manner, nor were any reflections cast on him, as to former misconduct, to damp his spirits, or cast, as his poor father more than once observed, a stumbling-block in the way of his doing well; and such may be termed, continued he, according to king Charles's rule, the repetition of old grievances. But the old complaint returned of early hours, and want of money to revel with: he began to filch handkerchiefs, and other loose game, as he termed it; but at this time he knew not how to dispose of such prizes to advantage, and out of mere necessity dropt the pursuit, and looked out for cash only, of which he got occasional supplies in this dangerous way without detection.

Unhappily for him, his good, forbearing, and most kind master died, and it was three months before he could gain

another employer; and this was a bad season for him, as he had more gratifying opportunities to indulge his natural propensities to vice and extravagance: but here we will let him speak for himself.

“I never was given to drink further than as it promoted fun in society; but I was inordinately fond of raffles, cards, and dancing, and this led me to the company of loose females, that caused my ruin; and all I got, I spent profusely on them. Constancy was not my motto; like the Grand Seignior, I threw my handkerchief first to one, and then to another, as fancy prompted; and my character for generosity urged them to meet me more than half way. A good-disposed woman may work miracles with a man who loves her; but, alas, for me! I only loved the reverse of all that is virtuous, and those who for money would chat and advise me in iniquity. On the other hand my male companions learned me to be very expert in sin; I grew into such a state that I dared not to think or reflect, night or day; I looked backward on folly, and forward with dread; I was ashamed to look my parents and relations in the face, and I fatally quitted my home. Oh! my poor mother, how bitter was her grief! but I was lost to all feeling — the devil had the upper-hand of me.

“My most dangerous associate was a young man named Barnard M’Guire, an Irishman, who went amongst us by the slang appellation of the *darling of a boy*. Though of the sister kingdom, he was apprenticed to a tailor at Dumfries, but preferred the profession of a pickpocket. He was tall, athletic, and courageous, and became my instructor in the science; in short, he was clever at every thing, and always gave me fair play as to my share; but we sometimes played the double on our companions, even Barnard’s own brother, who was also a thief.”

From this we find that *honour* was not in this confederacy kept up against mankind, as is reported by an old proverb, “Look for honour, where will you find it? *why there is honour amongst thieves.*” : Along with this set Hoggart was initiated into those receptacles where stolen goods may be disposed of without a question asked, and the poor wretch who risks his life for the spoil, must be

content with what is given him. Rash youth, ponder on this, and seek honest ways! you only make yourselves like hewers of wood and drawers of water to these harpies.

Hoggart, in his remarks in prison, cautioned persons against needlessly and carelessly exposing their money to view. One example he gives is as follows: "We observed a gentleman, one morning, with a heap of notes in his hand, coming out of a banking-house. It was my turn to follow him. I did so, from place to place, without any chance offering; something or another intervened, and it was full five in the evening before I could make a snatch at him, and then, to my great disappointment, I only got eleven pounds. He must have been paying it away, for it was in the very identical case I had beheld him put the notes in, in the morning; and he was engaged in close conversation with a gentleman, when I slipt past and robbed him so expertly, that he was quite unconscious of the act."

He said, the Irishman and he, one night, took a pocket-book containing above two hundred pounds in notes, and they converted it into cash without much trouble, and never heard a word about it afterwards. Their companions knew they had taken one, but they produced one only stuffed with fine tissue paper, which they said, the man had carried to preserve his better property and the hoax passed off well. "Never," continued he, "was I happier than while spending this money; but I fell ill, and repentance followed, and I took the crime to heart most sore: perhaps it was the loser's all; I only squandered it in waste. But this impression, like the rest, soon wore off; all evil staid, and during this illness Hoggart was again received under his parental roof, and every means resorted to in hopes to reclaim one who, as yet, was little more than a child: ministers prayed by him, and good people counselled, but all in vain; no sooner was his health partially restored than he was off, and joined his former associates; they then visited all the principal towns in Scotland, and laid them under heavy contributions, and ran through every scene of villainy from picking pockets to shop-lifting, highway-robbery,

and house-breaking. He was often taken, and as often his appearance, or strong arm, rescued him: and many were his escapes from gaol in the most singular and dexterous manner; for he was ever on the watch for a favourable opportunity, and his great agility was an essential friend in need, in which he too much depended. He was committed to the House of Correction, and visited by his widowed father, and many friends, but to no salutary purpose, though he was again afflicted with sickness, but nothing could then reform him, though he seems to have been favoured with frequent warnings, had he improved on them.

He was discharged from the House of Correction in January, 1819, and soon became most notorious: depredation followed depredation, in which he was concerned and at length he was apprehended for burglary, tried and convicted, and placed in the condemned cell at Dumfries, where he committed the horrid act which eventually led him to an ignominious death, as an example to deter others from pursuing his career. He had concerted his escape with two other convicts; a secret plan was laid, and Hoggart armed himself with a round stone, placed in a bag, as the only offensive weapon within his reach. He thus describes the dread event:—

“ I concealed myself in the dark closet, at the head of the stairs, where I had previously placed the bag with the stone. I will not betray them that procured them for me, but they were not in my hat when taken to prison, as was generally supposed. Dunbar then called to Morrin, the turnkey, to let out the minister; this he did, and shut the grating. He then came up the stairs with a basin of potatoe soup for M'Gregory, and when he came to the top, he closed the middle door; I then rushed out, pushed open the door, and knocked the plate out of his hand. I struck him *one blow* with the stone, and he rolled down stairs; I lost not a moment, but pulled the keys from his bosom, and threw them down. Dunbar picked hem up. I think no other blows were given, so that he must have met his death-wound in falling; if he had more blows, they did not come from me. I remember

seeing Dunbar at top of him, rifling him, I suppose, for the keys, before he knew I had got them, and Simpson was shaking him by the shoulders. I seized the outer key from Dunbar, and crossed the yard as steadily and composed as I could; but not with the key in my hand, for that would have let the debtors know what I was at. Some of the witnesses also deposed on my trial that I was bare-headed; this was not the case; true, I had not my own hat, but had seized Dunbar's in my hurry. All this is, however, most immaterial; I only mention how incautiously people swear, even on a trial of life and death. On getting out of the gate, I ran with all speed round the eastern wall of the gaol, and then walked rapidly along the back street, and through a part of the town, till I came to the King's Arms Inn, where I saw Dunbar making up to me; and at the same moment beheld an officer appear from the opposite corner, and make towards us. On this we wheeled about, and ran faster, but Dunbar was taken before he had got ten yards, and I had the mortification to see my fellow-fugitive secured. I once thought of bolting amongst the mob and endeavouring to rescue him, but soon found this would not do, for the numbers kept augmenting, and the necessity of self-preservation was uppermost.

"I bolted through the main yard of the inn without meeting any one, and kept by the water-edge, till I came to the east of the Columgan Wood: I leaped a deep ditch, covered with briers. Having run nearly ten miles in a single hour, I was then in the high road to Annan, but on turning round, saw a post chaise in full gallop within twenty yards of me. On this I threw off my coat, and leaped a hedge into a field, and crossed it like a hare: there were some labourers in it, and as soon as the officers got out of the chaise, and told them the matter, they joined in the pursuit; but I suppose they thought I made for the wood, instead of which I bolted sideways over a hedge, and lay snug in the deep ditch. Little did they think they had passed me, and that so near, that I could have touched the skirt of John Richardson the turnkey's at. And here I must observe, he is one of the most

humane and tender-hearted of his profession, though firm in his duty: I leave him my thanks and good wishes for the past. As they went one way, I naturally enough went another, and never did a fox double the hounds in a better style. Before the dawn rose, I ran through Annan, and had reached the second mile in the Carlisle road. I went into a plantation near a small farm-house, and, watching an opportunity, dived completely into a haystack, and lay there till two the next day, when I heard a woman call to a boy, and ask him if the lad was taken, who had broken out of Dumfries gaol. No, he believed not, was the reply, 'but poor Morrin, the turnkey, died last night.' These words struck me to the very soul; my hair seemed to stand on end, and my heart died within me, and I actually fainted; on my recovering my senses, I could scarce believe the dreadful news—the bare idea of causing Morrin's death. God is my witness that I was an unintentional murderer, and may he have mercy on my sinful soul! And let gay youths beware, for one crime leads to another, till the gallows gets its due, as in my case.

"The woman and boy passed on, and I got out of the hay-stack, determining not to stay, as I first intended, until it was dark, but pursue my way at all hazards. Ah! how bitter was my remorse! and how frequently did I wish my victim alive again, even though I was a prisoner in Dumfries gaol! but that could not be—the die was cast. As I advanced on the road, I would have given the world for a change of clothes. At length I saw a tidyish scarecrow in a field; I undressed him, and put on his rags, and marched out in the garb of a potatoe-bogle, but with an agitated mind, as may well be imagined by them who place themselves in my unhappy circumstances. On the Wednesday night I slept in a hay-loft, and in the morning I was awakened by a man coming to fill the horses' racks, and he was within a foot of me, but I was nearly covered with hay, and he did not observe me. A police officer of the town came into the stable-yard, and I was the subject of their conversation. 'Ah!' said the stableman, 'he maun be a terrible fellow!' The other re-

plied, ‘Oh, he’s the awfust child that ever was, and has broken a’ the gaols in Scotland ; and I wish he may keep awa’ now, it will not bring back the man’s life he’s be’en taken ; and I well know his honest father, poor soul ! ah, ‘tis God’s blessing the lad’s mother lived not to see this ad day !’

“It was near eight in the morning before I could find an opportunity to start from my concealment, and pursue my weary way to Carlisle, where I arrived, almost worn out, about eight on the Thursday evening, on a very wet night.

“I repaired to the house of a woman named Stubbs, which was situated near the Riccar-gate ; I had formerly lodged with her as Barney M’Caul, and knew her to be a worthy, tender-hearted creature. She shrieked on seeing me, and asked why I came hither. I put on a good face, and laughingly asked what was the matter. She said all the town were in an uproar about me, and were sure that Barney M’Caul and Hoggart, who had killed the gaoler at Dumfries, were one and the same person. I stoutly denied it, but the poor creature seemed terrified every moment I stayed there ; her fears increased, and she expected the officers were coming for me at the least sound she heard near the door.

“I told her I was not Hoggart, neither had I committed a murder, yet I did not wish, for certain reasons, to fall into the hands of the officers ; and that I was worn out with fatigue and fasting, and I asked her what I should do, and implored her assistance.

“She gave me a dram of liquor, which much refreshed me, and then took me to a snug birth at the house of a friend of hers, near the Scotch-gate, for she assured me I was not safe at her dwelling. Here I got some victuals ; and this was the first time I had broken my fast since I so fatally quitted the gaol at Dumfries ; nothing but an occasional draught of water had passed my lips.

“I soon found that what Mrs. Stubbs had said was true ; my name, my crime, and the description of my person, had reached Carlisle, and was posted at every corner ; and the identity too well agreed with that of Barney

M'Caul. I was not without my fears of being betrayed by the friends of this kind woman ; but if they were so disposed, I knew they must ; and I resolved to take my chance, for it was impossible for me to go further without rest and refreshment. But my fears were void of foundation, and I was well supplied : Mrs. Storey procured me some women's clothes, and in these I resolved to pursue my journey, for with some alterations they fitted me extremely well, and looked neat and comfortable, so as not to excite suspicion.

"I left Carlisle late on Friday night, and, being afraid of any conveyance, started for Newcastle on foot, and arrived there on Monday evening just at dusk ; and I never entered but one public-house by the way, having taken provisions with me that I might avoid them. I walked fast all night on the road, and in the day-time loitered through lone places and plantations.

"When I arrived at Newcastle, I put up at the Head, at Sandgate ; and remained there twelve days, still in my woman's dress, pretending business in that place, and carried on the farce very well ; and I might have had several suitors, but I said I was a married woman, and behaved very modest and circumspect to keep my lovers at a distance. I met with a youth named Fleming, and we had formerly been so intimate that I was under no scruple of discovering myself to him. He was glad to meet with such a partner, and sincerely welcomed his old pall to Newcastle, and we agreed to travel, and do business in our way together. The next day he went to the market, and fingered twenty pounds in notes, and some silver ; this was an acceptable supply indeed, and we left Newcastle. Fleming procured me male attire on the road, which I put on in a wood ; and he sold the woman's gear, which, he said, belonged to a wife he had lately buried, at an old clothes' shop in the next town we came to. I soon after fell ill, and was obliged to stop on the road : and my companion went out the next day, and never returned ; I suppose he was caught ; but to this hour I never more heard of him.

"My fever increased, but I did not want, having a good

supply of the needful ; yet my mind was a hell, and while confined to a solitary chamber, with no occupation but to think, the remembrance of poor Morrin tormented me night and day, and I determined to reform, and lead a new life, if I got better ; which I did, by the favour of youth and a good constitution, in a short time, when the disorder turned. "Happy," observed Hoggart, concluding this part of his history, "had I then died, and saved my family this disgrace!"

After this event, Hoggart's remorse and good resolution were short-lived, and we soon find him again in the full career of crime. After performing many exploits in England and Scotland, he repaired to the sister kingdom, Ireland, with one Edgy. His comrade was well known in Belfast, and was taken up for some old offence. Being left to himself, Hoggart went to Lisburne market, and there commenced his first operations in the land of Hibernia. He had not been long in the market before he observed how freely the Irish lads dashed about their cash, although they are the worst in the world at parting with it on terms that suited our adventurer ; for when a thief is caught in the act, they practise his own profession upon him in retaliation — they strip him of all his money, and often his clothes also, and, giving him a sound thrashing, trouble themselves no more concerning him.

Leaving Belfast, he proceeded to Drummore, and attended the market there. Here he stole a pocket-book from a Cornish grazier, but only finding some letters in it, he threw it away ; but afterwards heard that there was a hundred pound note in it. The book was found, and restored to the owner, with its contents, on being advertised. He returned by the coach to Belfast, and remained a week, principally engaged in card and dice playing : but found the Irish more expert at it than himself, for he soon lost nine pounds ; but getting into their way of playing, and being joined by a sharp teacher, named Kane, they soon pigeoned the flats to some tune. Again he visited Drummore with one Mullen and another confederate, with whom he formed an intimacy ; but, the day being wet, nothing was done till towards evening, when they

accosted a horse-dealer, pretending to buy a mare: Hoggart priced it; Mullen kept him in talk as to its age, while our adventurer was picking his pocket; the dealer, however, found what he was at, and struck him with the but-end of the whip. Hoggart returned the compliment, and a violent scuffle took place; when the dealer, finding he had the worst of it, made off. Mullen was, the next day, taken up, on suspicion of a robbery, in which Hoggart was not concerned.

When Hoggart first arrived at Belfast from Scotland, he met Robert Platt, who had been confined in Dumfries gaol at the same time he was there; he was also at Drummore market that day, and was taken up for thieving, and, with a view of retrieving his liberty, he gave information he had seen our adventurer, the murderer, from Scotland. The constables, in hopes of obtaining the reward offered, took up a number of persons on suspicion; and, while he was seated in a public-house, several of them came in, and took up two young men, who were seated in the next box to him. Little did our hero think what they were after; but, in a few minutes, he beheld Platt peeping in at the room door, and instantly four constables sprang on him, and took him before a magistrate. The first question asked was his name. He replied, in the Irish brogue, "Why, sure, an' it is John MacCloggin." "Then," said one of the constables, "we must be mistaken in our man." The magistrate continued, "Where are you from?" He answered, "Sure from the town itself, right opposite the market-house."

Hoggart then underwent a strict cross examination, when the magistrate handed him the Dublin paper, called the *Hue-and-Cry*, pointing to a paragraph answering to the description of his person, and offering a considerable reward for his apprehension, and asked whether that was not his name. Hoggart denied it with some sauciness.

The magistrate said, he must be detained: and Hoggart replied, he had no objection, if he knew what for; for as to the paragraph, it concerned a Scotchman, and that he never was in Scotland in his life, and if he were detained, it must be at the magistrate's peril

The magistrate ordered three yeomen to sit up with Hoggart and the constables all night in the court-room. He was searched, but nothing found on him but a thirty-shilling note and some silver; the rest of his money being most cunningly concealed. He now thought all was over with him, if he did not make a violent struggle to regain his liberty, or perish in the attempt: he plied his guards with plenty of liquor, and thus rendered them very obliging to their prisoner. About eleven at night, he prevailed on them to allow him a female acquaintance to bring some supper. When the young woman came, he asked leave of them to let him speak to her a few moments behind the boxes in the court-room, where there was a large window. His request was granted, when taking a harlequin leap, Hoggart bolted right through the window, and alighted in the street, unhurt either by the glass or his descent. He crossed the street to an opposite entry, and saw the whole of the keepers staring at each other, and not knowing what to do. At last one of them said, "By —, we were *tould* he was the broth of a boy." Another replied, "Arragh, and he is the broth of a boy; but we must follow him yet." They retired from the shivered window, and Hoggart took the road to Belfast, and run fifteen Irish miles in two hours and a quarter; the next day he kept close, and on the subsequent morning took the coach to Newry, passing through Drummore on the way. He proceeded to the pigeon-house, and paid three pound ten in part of his passage to America; but it was strange, that he felt such an unconquerable aversion to crossing the Atlantic, that he forfeited the money, and the personal security he would have derived from the voyage. But Justice was not to be defrauded of her due, and the means which led to her being finally satisfied are rather singular. After Saint Patrick's Day, which he spent at Newry, and made very productive to his pocket, he left the town on foot by himself in the night, with the intention of going to Belfast, and shipping himself for France. When he had arrived as far as Castle William, he, fatally for himself, heard that a fair was to be held at Clough on the next day, about eight miles distant, and he

determined to repair there, and exercise his profession for the last time in Ireland, or indeed in the British dominions;—indeed it was the last time. He accordingly repaired to the ground, and had not been long there, when he observed a pig-driver placing some notes in his pocket-case. He priced one of his pigs, but of course, as usual, could not make a bargain; but, seizing an opportunity, he took the money, and hastening away, concealed the same in the collar of his coat, and had the temerity to return to the ground, when he was seized by the drover and two of his companions. His person was searched, but nothing found on it; the driver, however, positively swore, that Hoggart was the man who robbed him: and he was conveyed before a magistrate, where he gave his name as Daniel O'Brian, from Armagh, and denied the theft; but was committed to Downpatrick gaol to take his trial at the next assizes.

When he entered the gaol Hoggart was mistaken for one Arthur Connel by the gaoler; and he humoured the mistake in hopes it would screen his real identity as the murderer Hoggart.

We will now speak in his own words:—

“I soon found my fellow-prisoners a queer set of lads. To attempt a description of their dress, would be impossible; most of them had such rags, that had they taken them off, it is ten to one they could have found their way into them again. These highflyers had all their *fancy women*, and I was not long behind them in that respect, there was one lodged above me, whom I took a great mind to; and I used, through a hole in the top of my cell, to hand her up meat and liquor, and, in short, a part of every thing I had.

“The prisoners were here served out at three days' allowance at a time. One morning, after having received our usual supply, my fellow-prisoners and I agreed to block up the passage that led to our apartments, and break through to the women: they began to block up the doors with benches and tables; but I did not approve of that way, and began with the coal-spade to lift up the flags of the floor, and they all assisted me and we barri-

cadoed the door so completely that the gaolers could not get at us ; we then broke through to the females, and served their doors the same, and kept the premises two whole days, during which time we gave way to every wickedness ; and, of all the depraved scenes of my short and sinful life, none came up to the licentiousness in the gaol of Downpatrick. After this period of riot, we were broke in upon, and secured ; I was ironed and locked up in a cell, and kept in confinement till the day previous to my trial.

“ Alas ! a prison is the blackest and worse-conducted place in the world ; many a poor lad is brought to the gallows at last, because his first offence is punished by imprisonment ; this teaches him evil ways : whereas, if he had been soundly flogged, and sent home to his friends or parents, he might have turned out a good man. I cannot say that my bad habits were learned in gaol ; but this I can affirm, they were confirmed there. While I was in the gaol, I sent for the pig-driver, and made the affair up with him, by returning him his money, with a compliment, to bring him over to my purpose. He promised to say nothing against me on my trial, and he kept his word ; but the judge was prejudiced against me, through a mistake, and my defence went for nothing. The judge asked me if I did not come from Armagh, and had a father and brother of my own thieving profession.

“ I replied, I had a father and brother, but that he was mistaken ; for neither they or I were ever guilty of such a thing. I spoke the truth as to them, but as for myself, I leave the world to judge. He then in an angry tone persisted in what he had said ; and affirmed I had been tried before him, both at Dundalk and Carrickfurgus ; and that he knew me and all my family well. I declared, that I was never before a court in my life till then, and certainly I never was before him. The judge then addressed the jury, and said it did not signify whether they were clear of my being guilty of the present crime, for he would assure them that I was an old offender ; and at all events, they might return a verdict of felony at large. I sprung up, and declared I was getting no justice, and

said there was no proof of my being a felon; adding, 'How can I be deemed a felon, when not a single witness has made oath of it?'

"The judge, in an unbecoming rage, said, *he would make oath of it*, if necessary; and the jury immediately returned a verdict of *felony at large*, and I was sentenced to seven years' transportation; the judge, at the same time, telling me, that if I would produce my father, and show him (the judge) that he were mistaken in me, he would let me off with one year's imprisonment.

"I replied, that I would rather go abroad than let my friends know any thing of the matter; that he was sending me amongst pickpockets, where I should most likely learn the art myself; and the first man's pocket I would pick on my return, should be his."

Hoggart then observes, that he had been twice tried for his life in Scotland, and the first time he got *more than* justice, for he was acquitted; and the second time he got justice, for he was convicted: but in Ireland he got no justice at all; for he had none to speak against him but the judge, and he caused him to be condemned.

While in gaol he was recognised as M'Colgan, put into heavy irons, and conveyed to Kilmainham. He had been there but a few days when he tried to escape, by digging through a back wall, with the assistance of a number of convicts; having first secured the entrance door: but some other prisoners, who did not wish to join in the dangerous enterprise, gave information, and they were watched for on the other side. Our hero was the first that made his appearance through the aperture, and received a blow with a stick that cut through his right eye-brow, the scar of which was visible to the day of his death; Hoggart, however, rushed on, followed by the rest, but a high wall impeding their progress, they were secured by the soldiers, and locked up in different cells. A few hours after this, Hoggart called out of the world of his cell to two lovely young women, sisters, accused the murderer of a young lady in Dublin. He seemed to feel much for their situation, which was in some respects similar to his own, their hands having been washed in human

blood. It is remarkable that he gave them most salutary advice, and seriously exhorted them to pray for their future salvation. (They were afterwards condemned and executed.)

While in conversation with these unfortunate girls, the door of the cell opened, and the gaoler reproved Hoggart for talking to them, and bade him be silent; he refused, alleging he was doing nothing wrong, but was much interested for their fate. The gaoler told him to come down from the window; but he replied, that if the gaoler dared to come nigh him, he would beat him as flat as a pigeon-house door. The gaoler went out, but returned in a few minutes, and desired him to follow him to his room. Hoggart was going to do so, but on going out at the cell door, was seized by two men, and handcuffed, and a horrible thing, called a mouth-joke, clapped on his head. It comes down with iron bars, both before and behind the head, the front bar having a thick iron tongue that enters the mouth, and in this situation was put back into his cell. In an hour the gaoler returned, and said to him, "So you will hold your tongue now you can't speak?" Hoggart, of course, could not reply, and the mouth-joke was taken off, and the man repeated the question; the prisoner answered, he would be quiet for a while: but, being left in his cell, he resumed his place in the window, and remained there during the rest of the day, singing the most profane songs; and it was found that even the fear of the iron helmet of Kilmainham could not keep him quiet:—but there was a shock awaiting him to bring down his wicked heart, strong as it was.

This was the arrival of John Richardson, and his recognition of him as Hoggart: he had been tracing him ever since his flight from Drummore. After an examination at the police-office, it was thought necessary to remove him to Dumfries. An iron belt was passed round his waist, to which his wrists were pinioned; a chain passed from the front of the belt, and joined the centre of a chain, each end of which was passed round one of his ankles, and a chain also passed from each wrist to each ankle.

In this dreadful state of torture and confinement, he was conveyed to Dumfries by John Richardson and an Irish officer, named Robinson ; they were three days and two nights on the road, and in all that time he never had his hand to his mouth, but was fed and attended to like an infant. Hoggart, however, spoke highly of their humanity to him on their way ; and said, he had given up himself for lost ever since he entered the gaol of Kilmainham.

On their approach towards Dumfries, which was in the dark, thousands of people stood on the road with lighted torches in their hands, waiting Hoggart's arrival ; and when the coach stopped and drew up to the gaol door, it was scarce possible to make way through the crowd, all eager to get a sight of the murderer. Some seemed enraged, others terrified, and many melted into pity for one so young, whose fate was drawing rapidly to a close.

Hoggart plunged through the gazing multitude, rattling his chains, and making a great show of courage ; but he afterwards acknowledged that it was a false show, for his heart was trembling at the thought of poor Morrin ; and as he went up the narrow stairs to the cells, he had to pass the spot where he struck the fatal blow, and he said it felt like fire beneath his feet.

“ All that man could do,” said he, “ was done for me on my trial, and I had hopes till the Judge began to speak ! then my spirits began to fail ; for he was sore against me. I revived when I saw the jury consulting together ; but oh ! when they pronounced me *guilty*, my heartstrings seemed to break ; even then I was too proud and obstinate to show my feelings, and I almost bit my under lip through to hide my emotions. While the judge was passing the awful sentence, my brain turned dizzy, and I gasped for breath. They said I looked careless, but they could not see within me ; I scarce knew what had happened, or where I was ; every thing passed through my mind in a minute ; I thought of my father and then of my mother, who, poor woman ! died of a broken heart ; next I thought of escape, and very nearly made a plunge over the heads of the crowd ; and I could have cried out

when the sentence was over. I collected my thoughts, and of a sudden my heart appeared as hard as ever, and I exclaimed, 'Well, the man who is born to be hanged will never be drowned.' This I acknowledge to be very wicked ; but I could not help it, for I had no command of my words or actions at the time.

"After being brought back to the Calton gaol, the wickedness of my heart was still great ; and I had so little thought of my awful situation, that I composed the following verses out of bravado, to show them that my spirit was not to be conquered :

' Able and willing you will me find ;  
Though bound in chains, still free in mind ;  
For with these things I'll ne'er be griev'd,  
Although of freedom I'm bereav'd.

In this vain world there is no rest,  
And life is but a span at best ;  
The rich, the poor, the old, the young,  
Will all lay low before 'tis long.

I am a rogue, I don't deny,  
But never liv'd by treachery ;  
And to rob a poor man I disown,  
But only them of high renown.

Now for the crime that I'm condemn'd,  
The same I never did intend ;  
Only my liberty to take,  
As I thought my life did lie at stake.

My life by perjury was sworn away,  
I'll say that to my dying day ;  
Oh ! treacherous S ——, you did me betray,  
For all I wanted was — liberty.

Although in chains you see me fast,  
No frowns upon my friends, pray, cast ;  
For my relations were not to blame,  
And I brought my parents to grief and shame.

Now, all you ramblers, in mourning go,  
For the prince of ramblers is lying low ;  
And, all you maidens, who love the game,  
Put on your mourning-hoods again ;

And all your powers of music chant,  
To the memory of my dying rant;  
A song of melancholy sing,  
Till you make the very rafters ring.

Farewell, relations, and friends also,  
The time is nigh when I must go:  
As to foes, I have but one,  
But to the same I've done no wrong.'"

Soon after his condemnation he appeared, and indeed was, truly penitent. On the 28th of May, 1821, David Hoggart was visited in his cell by Mr. George Coombes, the craniologist (and some other gentleman), who wished to inspect his head, and to see if the exterior lines and physiognomy indicated internal depravity and that hardihood in sin, of which they had heard so much; but the inspection was not favourable to the system. On being told that he had a greater developement of the organs of benevolence and justice than the craniologist expected to find, his countenance softened, and he was observed to shed a tear; but then directly turning round, he said, with a look of sagacity, alluding to the possibility of discovering a character from the form of his head, and a smile of incredulity, "Well, that is *one* thing I did not know before." As he was not then tried, the conversation was only on general subjects, out of delicacy to the prisoner; but in subsequent interviews he gave the remarks on his own conduct and feelings that we have recorded.

Early in the morning of the day appointed for his execution, David Hoggart earnestly joined in devotion with his ministerial attendant, who had previously taken great pains with him; a prayer was then read by the chaplain of the gaol: an officer of justice then entered, and requested the persons present to retire, as he had something of great importance to communicate to the prisoner.

Hoggart started, and said, "Oh! I suppose it is the executioner arrived!" His accents were hurried, and his firmness, for a moment, forsook him; despair was pictured in his expressive dark countenance, and he paced the

cell with rapid strides. He speedily, however, regained his composure, and when the executioner entered, suffered his arms to be pinioned without a murmur, or making the least resistance.

He was then removed to the hall in the lower part of the lock-up house, where he was received by the magistrates, and two clergymen of Edinburgh. After prayers the melancholy procession proceeded to the fatal scaffold ; there the conduct of the unfortunate youth was in the highest degree becoming his most awful situation, and the beneficial influence of religion was conspicuous in his whole deportment, though his natural firmness never for a moment forsook him. He kneeled down and uttered a short, but very fervent prayer, and then gave a solemn exhortation to the vast multitude by whom he was surrounded ; he then resigned himself to his fate with that intrepidity which distinguished his short, guilty, but eventful life, and which might have led to wealth and happiness, had it been properly applied.



1870. 1871. 1872. 1873.

1874. 1875. 1876. 1877.

1878. 1879. 1880. 1881.

1882. 1883. 1884. 1885.

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